

I Claim:

1. A system for monitoring medical conditions of one or more patients in a building, said system comprising:
  - a control unit;
  - a plurality of medical condition monitoring units connected to said control unit; and
  - a plurality of speakers connected to said control unit, with said speakers being located at various different spaced-apart areas within the building, wherein an abnormal condition sensed at one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units is reported to said control unit, and said control unit causes said plurality of speakers to issue an audible alarm.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of speakers is volume controlled to cause the audible alarm to have a substantially constant volume level within the area of the building.
3. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
  - an annunciator panel connected to said control unit, wherein said annunciator panel is located at a nurse's desk.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein the audible alarm can be set to one of several different tones, volumes, chimes or sounds at the user's discretion.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein said plurality of speakers are located in the ceiling and/or walls of the building.
6. The system of claim 1, wherein said plurality of medical condition monitoring units are ventilators, and are hardwired to said control unit.
7. The system of claim 1, wherein said control unit has a battery backup, and wherein said control unit causes said plurality of speakers to issue the audible alarm at a first tone and/or volume in response to an abnormal condition sensed at one of said medical condition monitoring units, and causes said plurality of speakers to issue the audible alarm at a second and different tone and/or volume in response to a low battery backup condition.
8. The system of claim 1, wherein said plurality of speakers issue the audible alarm at an initial pitch or tone, and said pitch or tone changes over time, as the audible alarm continues.
9. The system of claim 1, wherein said pitch or tone changes to a pitch or tone more likely to gain the attention of, or annoy, a person hearing the pitch or tone.
10. The system of claim 1, wherein said plurality of speakers issue the audible alarm at a first volume, and said volume increases over time, as the audible alarm continues.

11. A system for monitoring medical conditions of one or more patients in a building, said system comprising:

a control unit;

a plurality of medical condition monitoring units connected to said control unit; and

a plurality of light sources connected to said control unit, with said light sources being located at various different spaced-apart areas within the building, wherein an abnormal condition sensed at one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units is reported to said control unit, and said control unit causes said plurality of light sources to emit light, so as to issue a visual alarm.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein said plurality of light sources includes light emitting diodes (LEDs).

12. The system of claim 10, wherein said light sources blink with a certain frequency, and wherein said certain frequency increases over time, as the visual alarm continues.

13. The system of claim 10, wherein said light sources emit light at a certain intensity, and wherein said light intensity increases over time, as the visual alarm continues.

14. The system of claim 10, wherein said light sources blink with a certain frequency and emit light at a certain intensity, and wherein said certain frequency and said light intensity increase over time, as the visual alarm continues.

15. The system of claim 1, wherein said plurality of light sources are located in the ceiling and/or walls of the building.

16. The system of claim 1, wherein said plurality of medical condition monitoring units are ventilators, and are hardwired to said control unit.

17. A system for monitoring medical conditions of one or more patients in a building, said system comprising:

a control unit;

a plurality of medical condition monitoring units connected to said control unit;

a plurality of speakers connected to said control unit, with said speakers being located at various different spaced-apart areas within the building, wherein an abnormal condition sensed at one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units is reported to said control unit, and said control unit causes said plurality of speakers to issue an audible alarm; and

a plurality of light sources connected to said control unit, with said light sources being located at various different spaced-apart areas within the building, wherein said control unit causes said plurality of light sources to emit light, so as to issue a visual alarm, whenever an abnormal condition is sensed at one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the plurality of light sources are located adjacent to the plurality of speakers at the various different spaced-apart areas within the building.

19. An adaptor for connecting a medical condition monitoring unit to a control unit of a monitoring system, said adapter comprising:

an input terminal for connection to an alarm output of a medical condition monitoring unit;

an output terminal for connection to the control unit of the monitoring system; and

circuitry including a switch, wherein in a first switch position, an alarm condition present at the alarm output of the medical condition monitoring unit is substantially immediately passed to said output terminal, and wherein in a second switch position, an alarm condition present at the alarm output of the medical condition monitoring unit is suppressed.

20. The adaptor of claim 19, wherein a momentary manual actuation of by a user causes said switch to stay in said second switch position for a predetermined period of time.

21. The adaptor of claim 20, wherein said circuitry presents an open circuit to two contacts of said output terminal when said switch is in said first switch position and the alarm output of the medical condition monitoring unit is indicating that no alarm condition is present.

22. The adaptor of claim 21, wherein said circuitry presents a closed circuit to said two contacts of said output terminal when said switch is in said first switch position and the alarm output of the medical condition monitoring unit is indicating that an alarm condition is present.
23. The adaptor of claim 22, wherein said circuitry presents an open circuit to said two contacts of said output terminal when said switch is in said second switch position, regardless of whether or not the alarm output of the medical condition monitoring unit is indicating that an alarm condition is present.
24. The adaptor of claim 20, wherein said circuitry presents a closed circuit to two contacts of said output terminal when said switch is in said first switch position and the alarm output of the medical condition monitoring unit is indicating that no alarm condition is present.
25. The adaptor of claim 24, wherein said circuitry presents an open circuit to said two contacts of said output terminal when said switch is in said first switch position and the alarm output of the medical condition monitoring unit is indicating that an alarm condition is present.
26. The adaptor of claim 25, wherein said circuitry presents a closed circuit to said two contacts of said output terminal when said switch is in said second switch position, regardless of

whether or not the alarm output of the medical condition monitoring unit is indicating that an alarm condition is present.

27. The adaptor of claim 20, wherein said predetermined period of time is approximately two minutes.

28. A system for monitoring medical conditions of one or more patients in a building, said system comprising:

a control unit;

a plurality of medical condition monitoring units connected to said control unit;

a plurality of speakers connected to said control unit, with said speakers being located at various different spaced-apart areas within the building, wherein an abnormal condition sensed at one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units is reported to said control unit, and said control unit causes said plurality of speakers to issue an audible alarm;

a plurality of light sources connected to said control unit, with said light sources being located at various different spaced-apart areas within the building, wherein said control unit causes said plurality of light sources to emit light, so as to issue a visual alarm, whenever an abnormal condition is sensed at one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units; and

an adaptor connecting one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units to said control unit of said monitoring system, said adapter including:

an input terminal for connection to an alarm output of one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units;

an output terminal for connection to said control unit; and circuitry including a switch, wherein in a first switch position, an alarm condition present at said alarm output of said one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units is substantially immediately passed to said output terminal, and wherein in a second switch position, an alarm condition present at said alarm output of said one of said plurality of medical condition monitoring units is suppressed.